PASSAGE TWO (Questions 6–9)

To Americans, the Pony Express was a fixture of the Old West; most Americans are rather surprised to find out that in reality the Pony Express was in existence for only a short period of time, about a year and a half. This forefather of "express" mail service operated between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, a distance of just under 2,000 miles; letters and small packages could be delivered in under 10 days instead of the 3 to 4 weeks that it had taken prior to the institution of the Pony Express.

In 1860, St. Joseph was the westernmost terminal of the country's railroad system; mail destined for the West Coast could come to St. Joe by train, but the only way to get it farther west was on horseback. The Pony Express service was established on April 3, 1860, to fill this need: a letter carried on horseback with only minimal downtime for changes in horses and riders could cover 200 miles in one twenty-four hour period.

The Pony Express system consisted of approximately 80 riders, 400 horses, and 190 stations every 10 to 15 miles along the route. One rider took a mail pouch and carried it for 75 miles, changing his tired horse for a fresh one at every station; he then passed the pouch to another rider. Riders traveled day and night, and the mail never stopped.

On October 24, 1861, only a year and a half after the start of the Pony Express, the first transcontinental telegraph opened for business, ending the need for the Pony Express. The Pony Express officially closed for business on October 26, 1861; obviously its owners were quick to recognize that the need for their services had just been basically wiped out.

6. In which course would this passage most likely be assigned reading?
   (A) Veterinary Medicine
   (B) Speech Communication
   (C) Audiology
   (D) American History

7. Where in the passage does the author mention the amount of time it took to deliver a letter before the Pony Express?
   (A) Lines 1–3
   (B) Lines 3–6
   (C) Lines 9–11
   (D) Lines 12–13

8. Where in the passage does the author discuss why the Pony Express was discontinued?
   (A) The first paragraph
   (B) The second paragraph
   (C) The third paragraph
   (D) The fourth paragraph

9. What is the author's purpose in writing this passage?
   (A) To warn of the dire effects of ending the Pony Express
   (B) To describe a little-known reality about a historical subject
   (C) To incite readers to action on behalf of the Pony Express
   (D) To describe the development of express mail service

Phillips, D. (2003). Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test : The Paper Test. New York: Longman.